

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-03 PA-01 SP-02 L-01 NSAE-00 ACDA-10 ACDE-00
/045 W

-----060279 081409Z /43

P R 081332Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7467
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 06398

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, UR, GW
SUBJECT: BREZHNEV VISIT TO BONN: MAY 4 TO 6, 1978

REF: BONN 06148

SUMMARY: PRELIMINARY FRG THINKING IS TO MAKE ECONOMIC
COOPERATION THE CENTERPIECE OF BREZHNEV'S VISIT. THE
GERMANS EXPECT THE SOVIETS TO FOCUS PRIMARILY ON
ECONOMIC AND SECURITY ISSUES. SCHMIDT HOPES TO
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AVOID CONTRETEMPS OVER BERLIN, KEEPING DISCUSSION ON
A GENERAL, NON-TECHNICAL LEVEL WHICH BREZHNEV WILL BE
ABLE TO HANDLE PERSONALLY WITHOUT THE DISRUPTIVE
INFLUENCE OF GROMYKO. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING OUR TOUR D'HORIZON ON APRIL 6, I ASKED
VAN WELL ABOUT THE FORTHCOMING BREZHNEV VISIT.

REGARDING TIMING, VAN WELL CONFIRMED THE ANALYSIS WE HAD BEEN GIVEN EARLIER BY THE WORKING LEVEL (REFTEL) THAT BREZHNEV'S IMPROVED HEALTH WAS PROBABLY THE MAJOR REASON FOR THE SCHEDULING OF HIS VISIT. VAN WELL ALSO THOUGHT THE VISIT WAS PART OF A GENERAL EFFORT BY BREZHNEV TO MAKE ANOTHER TRY AT ACHIEVING MORE RESULTS ON DETENTE. HE THOUGHT BREZHNEV WOULD NOT HAVE OPTED FOR THE VISIT IF THE SOVIET ASSESSMENT HAD BEEN THAT IT WOULD FAIL DURING A PERIOD OF TENSION BETWEEN MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON.

2. VAN WELL SAID THE FOREIGN OFFICE WAS JUST BEGINNING TO FOCUS ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE VISIT. THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT THE SOVIETS PLANNED ANYTHING SPECTACULAR AND NOT MUCH WAS EXPECTED FROM THE VISIT IN CONCRETE TERMS. PRELIMINARY FRG THINKING WAS TO FOCUS THE VISIT ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION, AN AREA IN WHICH VAN WELL SAID SOME PROGRESS HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE. THE GERMANS ALSO WISHED TO DISCUSS INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, INCLUDING THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE WHERE SCHMIDT WAS ANXIOUS TO WORK FOR GREATER SOVIET INVOLVEMENT.

3. VAN WELL THOUGHT THE SOVIETS WOULD WANT TO FOCUS ON SECURITY, DISARMAMENT AND ECONOMIC ISSUES. THEY ALSO WANTED A "POLITICAL DOCUMENT" COMPLETE WITH SECRET

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SIGNING CEREMONY RATHER THAN THE CUSTOMARY JOINT DECLARATION. VAN WELL IMPLIED THAT THE GERMANS WERE AGREEABLE ON THIS SCORE. HE THOUGHT THERE MIGHT ALSO BE AN AGREEMENT ON LONG-TERM ECONOMIC COOPERATION. A DOUBLE TAXATION AGREEMENT WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE READY FOR SIGNATURE. IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT THERE WOULD BE ADDITIONAL BILATERAL AGREEMENTS BECAUSE OF DIFFERENCES OVER BERLIN.

4. REGARDING SECURITY QUESTIONS, VAN WELL NOTED THAT THE TABLING OF THE WESTERN INITIATIVE ON MBFR WOULD PUT THE GERMANS IN THE DESIRABLE POSITION OF MAINLY LISTENING TO THE SOVIET REACTION TO THE WESTERN PROPOSALS. VAN WELL EXPECTED THAT THERE WOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF THE SSOD.

5. VAN WELL SAID THE GERMANS WERE ANXIOUS TO AVOID MAKING BERLIN A CENTERPIECE OF THE VISIT. THE GERMANS WOULD NOT MAKE ANY PROPOSALS ON THE THREE AGREEMENTS HELD UP BECAUSE OF THE BERLIN CLAUSE. THEY BELIEVED GROMYKO WAS TOTALLY NEGATIVE ON THIS ISSUE AND THAT THERE WAS LITTLE POSSIBILITY OF PROGRESS. VAN

WELL EMPHASIZED THAT THE FRG WOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT
LACK OF MOVEMENT ON BERLIN SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED
AS A FAILURE OF THE VISIT.

6. THE GERMANS DID, HOWEVER, WISH TO DISCUSS THE
IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACHED TO THE QUADRIPARTITE

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 06398

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AGREEMENT. THEY HOPED TO INCLUDE LANGUAGE TO THAT
EFFECT IN THE POLITICAL STATEMENT. THE CHANCELLOR
PLANNED TO DISCUSS PERSONALLY THE IMPORTANCE HE
ATTACHED TO BERLIN AS A FACTOR IN STRENGTHENING
MUTUAL CONFIDENCE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE
WOULD STATE FRANKLY THAT THIS CONFIDENCE HAD BEEN
UNDERMINED BY RECENT SOVIET INTERPRETATIONS OF THE QA.
VAN WELL NOTED THAT SOVIET AMBASSADOR FALIN HAD

TAKEN A SIMILAR POSITION IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH
SENIOR GERMAN OFFICIALS, I.E. THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE
LOST CONFIDENCE IN FRG WILLINGNESS TO ABIDE BY THE QA.

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7. VAN WELL STRESSED THAT THE GERMANS WANTED TO
AVOID CONTRETEMPS OVER BERLIN. IT WAS IMPORTANT
NOT TO GET TOO TECHNICAL OR TO FOCUS TOO CLOSELY
ON SPECIFIC ITEMS THAT MIGHT CAUSE BREZHNEV TO
TURN THE DISCUSSION OVER TO GROMYKO. THE GERMANS
BELIEVED GROMYKO WAS A STUMBLING BLOCK TO ANY
PROGRES ON BERLIN MATTERS.

8. VAN WELL SAID THE SOVIETS HAD BEGUN TO ADOPT A
MORE POSITIVE TONE IN THEIR MEDIA COVERAGE OF
RELATIONS WITH BONN. HE THOUGHT THE INTRUSION OF
THE SOVIET MILITARY PATROL INTO PRESIDENT SCHEEL'S
CONVOY IN BERLIN WAS A DELIBERATE MOVE BY
ABRASIMOV WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS FROM MOSCOW. VAN WELL
BELIEVED ABRASIMOV HAD REMARKABLE LEEWAY AND NOTED
THAT FALIN WAS VERY UNHAPPY ABOUT THIS.

9. VAN WELL WILL MEET WITH FALIN ON APRIL 7 TO
DISCUSS THE PROGRAM FOR THE VISIT. WHEN I SAW THE
CHANCELLOR EARLIER IN THE WEEK, HE MENTIONED THAT
HE WOULD PROBABLY TAKE BREZHNEV TO HAMBURG FOR ONE
DAY OF HIS VISIT.
STOESSEL

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